

Oswaldtwistle St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119451
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	313299
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Shirley Herring

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Canon Michael Ratcliffe
Headteacher	Mrs Gwynneth Bennett
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2004
School address	Union Road Oswaldtwistle Accrington Lancashire BB5 3DD
Telephone number	01254 231026
Fax number	01254 395717

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	6–7 May 2008
Inspection number	313299

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school draws pupils from areas of considerable social disadvantage. Two of the six classes contain more than one age group. Approximately two thirds of pupils are from a White British background with sizeable numbers of pupils from a Pakistani heritage or from a Gypsy/Roma background. The number of pupils whose home language is not English is broadly average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school supports students in initial teacher training and on child care courses. The school has links with the church, local high schools and is part of a cluster of schools working on improving opportunities for Gypsy/Roma pupils. A high proportion of pupils join or leave the school at varying times. After school care and holiday facilities are available.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. Pupils' personal development is good and they behave well. Pupils enjoy school, particularly the good range of additional activities on offer. They feel safe and have great confidence in their teachers. They have a good understanding of a healthy lifestyle and are now benefiting from healthy meals cooked in the new school kitchen. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community, for example, by delivering newsletters to local residents. They are satisfactorily prepared for their future well-being through experiencing responsibilities in school but some pupils are hindered by weaker numeracy skills. Despite exceptional efforts by the school, attendance is below average.

Pupils make satisfactory progress from a low starting point when they enter school. They make good progress in the Reception class and Key Stage 1 because of consistently good teaching and good use of assessment information to plan work for different groups. In the 2007 national assessments in Year 2, standards were broadly average and pupils achieved well. Almost half of the pupils exceeded the expected level in reading because of the school's strong focus on this aspect, though few reached the higher level in mathematics or writing. Standards are below average in Key Stage 2. A lower than average proportion attains the higher levels. In the 2007 national tests, standards were broadly average in English because of the good level of support and improved opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects. Standards were below average in mathematics. Achievement was broadly satisfactory, though some more able pupils did not achieve as well as they could. The school places great emphasis on providing a high level of care for all its pupils, but particularly the most vulnerable. This is recognised and appreciated by the local communities. In a strong commitment to inclusion, led by the headteacher, the school has dedicated expenditure to providing a good number of skilled learning support staff; this enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to make good progress, particularly in English. The school works closely with other agencies to provide specialist help and support where needed. Pupils are given good guidance in their personal development. However, pupils are not given sufficient individual guidance on what they need to do to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and the commitment to providing high quality care is good. The headteacher and senior teachers monitor the school's work regularly, though their overall judgements are a little generous. They do not always analyse the wealth of available information with sufficient rigour to bring about the necessary improvements in standards more quickly. Improvements in Key Stage 1 and in English in Key Stage 2 indicate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school makes good provision for children in the Foundation Stage so they achieve well. Children enter the school with a range of skills that are below, and often well below, what is typical for their age. They make good progress in the Reception class because of good, lively teaching, based on purposeful, practical activities that show a good understanding of how young children learn. Nevertheless, standards remain below average when children enter Year 1. The curriculum is good. It is broad and balanced and meets the needs of different groups successfully. The curriculum has been considerably enhanced by the recent addition of a

dedicated, secure outdoor area to extend learning opportunities. Regular assessments of children's progress are used effectively to plan the next stage of learning. Good induction procedures enable children to settle quickly into school life.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Improve achievement for more able pupils.
- Make better use of information to identify and tackle underachievement.
- Give clearer guidance to individual pupils to help them to improve.

A small number of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are below average overall when pupils leave school though they make satisfactory progress from a low starting point. Only about half of the pupils currently in Year 6 started the school in Reception and school records show that these pupils generally make better progress than others. Children enter school with skills that are below those usual for their age. They make good progress in the Reception class because of good teaching and a varied curriculum, though standards are below the expected level when they start in Year 1. All pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and achieve well because of consistently good teaching. In the 2007 national tests standards were broadly average. The number achieving the higher level in reading was above average because of the school's strong focus on this area. Fewer pupils achieved a higher level in mathematics or writing.

Standards are below average in Key Stage 2 and progress is satisfactory overall. After disappointing results in 2006 there was a good improvement in English in the 2007 national tests; standards were broadly average, exceeding their target, though fewer than average reached the higher level. This improvement is due to the school's successful focus on reading and writing and on the high level of skilled support provided. Standards in mathematics remained below average. Few pupils attained the higher level and some more able pupils did not achieve as well as they could. The school has only recently increased the classroom support for mathematics and it is too soon to judge its impact. Pupils make good progress in science because lessons are practical. Standards in science are broadly average. The good level of support provided, particularly in literacy, enables pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those learning English as an additional language to achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Guided by the school's Christian tradition and a good programme for personal, social and health education, pupils' personal development is good. The school's clear systems of sanctions and rewards are consistently applied and behaviour is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school fosters an ethos of mutual respect and understanding, so pupils from different cultures and backgrounds work and play harmoniously together. Pupils are developing a good awareness of a healthy lifestyle. The recent addition of a new kitchen has improved pupils' appreciation of a healthy diet. They join in well with the varied opportunities

for exercise in class and after school. Pupils say they feel safe because they can talk to adults in school should they have a problem. Pupils enjoy coming to school and particularly like the good range of extra activities on offer. They make a good contribution to the school community through the many responsibilities such as school councillors or as 'Friendly Eyes' in the playground. Pupils join in well with church activities. They are satisfactorily prepared for the future through working together in school and meeting people from the world of work. Pupils are hindered somewhat by below average standards in mathematics. Despite the school's best efforts, attendance is below average. This is due in part to some pupils taking extended breaks from education in term time and some pupils travelling with their families.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. All teachers apply the school rules consistently so behaviour is good. Teaching is unfailingly good in Key Stage 1 and pupils achieve well. Lessons are interesting, lively and well planned so learning moves at a good pace. Teachers make good use of assessment information to plan suitable work for different groups. Pupils are regularly asked to explain their working and this improves their understanding. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 2. Teachers give clear explanations and instructions so that pupils know what to do. However, work is not always well matched to meet the needs of different groups, particularly the more able and so they do not achieve as well as they can. Some lessons lack pace so that more able pupils are not sufficiently challenged. Skilled teaching assistants are well deployed throughout the school and have helped to improve learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is broad and balanced and generally meets pupils' needs while supporting pupils' good personal development. The school's emphasis on developing reading and increased opportunities for writing in other subjects has led to an improvement in standards in English. Additional strategies are used in mathematics, although there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their numeracy skills in other subjects. The school is developing the creative aspects of the curriculum, for example, a specialist music teacher provides a weekly keyboard lesson for all pupils in Year 6. The good range of additional activities and clubs enhances pupils' enjoyment of school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school takes very good care of all its pupils but is particularly successful in providing high quality care for the most vulnerable. All recommended procedures for safeguarding pupils are in place. The school provides a good level of support, including for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. There are good links with other professionals to provide specialist help when needed. The school has established good systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress. The available information is not always used effectively to tackle any slowing down in progress at an early stage. Pupils are not always precisely clear what they need to do to improve their literacy and numeracy skills.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school's commitment to providing a high level of care for all its pupils is recognised and appreciated by parents and local community groups. Many parents speak of 'a welcoming school' and the school has worked hard to successfully integrate pupils who arrive at different times, including some who had behavioural difficulties in other schools. The strong emphasis on inclusion, emanating from the headteacher, has fostered good relationships throughout the school. Governance is satisfactory. The school's actions in providing additional resources and support have helped to improve standards in English over time, particularly in reading. However, more recent actions to improve standards in mathematics have yet to have an impact. Leaders monitor the school's work regularly. They do not use information sufficiently rigorously to identify underachievement and to target precisely areas for improvement. There have been satisfactory improvements since the last inspection and the school provides sound value for money.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
--	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

9 May 2008

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Oswaldtwistle St Paul's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,
Lancashire, BB5 3DD

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school recently. I enjoyed talking to you in lessons and in the school council. I was particularly impressed by your good behaviour and the way you seem to get on so well with each other.

Yours is a satisfactory school. There are many good things about it but some things could be even better. I agree with you that the school takes good care of you. There is always an adult in class to give you a little extra help when you need it and to help you get on. I liked the new outdoor area for the Reception class which gives children extra space for their exciting activities.

You are making satisfactory progress in your work but some of you could do even better, particularly in Key Stage 2. Your teachers give you clear explanations to help you understand what to do, but I think that those of you who can work more quickly could be given more challenging work.

I have asked the school to do these things to improve your learning:

- help pupils in Key Stage 2 to do better in mathematics
- help the more able pupils to reach a higher standard
- look more closely at how well you are learning
- make sure that each of you knows what you need to do to improve in literacy and numeracy.

You can help by continuing to work hard and support each other. I wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Shirley Herring

Lead inspector